

# INDIA AND HER FUTURE

Compiled from the writings of  
SRI AUROBINDO and THE MOTHER :  
with sketches of their life and work

SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY  
PONDICHERRY - 2

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The Mother, Sri Aurobindo
2. Kandarya Mahadeva Temple, Khajuraho.
3. The Great Temple, Tanjore.
4. Mahabodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya.
5. Lingaraj Temple, Bhuvaneshwar.
6. Mahishasuramardini, Mahabalipuram.
7. Trimurti, Elephanta Caves.
8. The Buddha delivering the First Sermon  
at Sarnath.
9. Siva Nataraja, Bronze, Chola period.
10. Flying Musicians, Ajanta Cave 17.
11. Bodhisattava Padmapani, Ajanta Cave I.
12. The Buddha in Kapilavastu, Mother  
and Child, Ajanta Cave 17.



## COMPILER'S NOTE

Because of the vast range of his writings, no compilation from Sri Aurobindo can claim to be comprehensive in every way. The present, however, is a cross-section of the words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother that have a direct bearing on India's past, present, and, more than anything else, on her incalculably glorious Future — a Future with which is indissolubly bound up the Future of the whole world, of all humanity.

The extracts have not been given their dates of publication as they are immortal truths of perennial value, and apply today as they did when they first came out from the Seer-vision of the Mother and the Master. Today, in this 'Hour of God', India, especially her growing youths, need them more than ever before. In fact, some of the extracts are addressed right to the youths of India.

The extracts, collected from various sources, have been grouped under proper titles in order to ensure some coherence among their basic ideas. Besides, this may help the reader to have an over-all perception of what the contents of the compilation suggest towards the reconstruction of India's national life for its larger fulfilments in the future.

The works used in the compilation and in the sketches are: Sri Aurobindo—Bhavani Mandir, Collected Poems and Plays, On Education, On Nationa-

lism, On Yoga, Savitri, Speeches, The Foundations of Indian Culture, The Hour of God, The Human Cycle, The Ideal of the Karmayogin, The Life Divine, The Messages of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, The Mother, The National Value of Art, The Renaissance in India, Yoga and its Objects, Bande Mataram (Daily and Weekly), Mother India (Monthly), Sri Aurobindo Pathamandir Annual, The Standard Bearer (Weekly), Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education (Quarterly), Prayers and Meditations of the Mother, Words of the Mother. Sisirkumar Mitra's Evolution of India, Resurgent India, The Liberator — Sri Aurobindo, India and the World.

The first two sections of Part Two, on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, are by the compiler.

The pictures in the compilation are as examples of Sri Aurobindo's revealing exposition of Indian art included in it. Grateful acknowledgements are due to Archaeological Survey of India; Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamil Nadu; Department of Tourism, Government of West Bengal; Institut Français d'Indologie, Pondicherry; Shrimati Anjani Dayanand, Chief Secretary, Government of Pondicherry; Ashram Photographers; for providing photographic prints for reproduction.

The compiler is happy that this book is coming out just a year before the First Birth Centenary of Sri Aurobindo on 15 August 1972, and for this he is grateful to Shri Navajata, General Secretary, Sri

Aurobindo Society and Auroville, who asked him  
to do this service to the Mother.

Sri Aurobindo Ashram  
Pondicherry-2

Sisirkumar Mitra

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PART ONE

SRI AUROBINDO ON INDIA AND  
HER FUTURE

## MOTHER INDIA

Mother India is not a piece of earth; she is a Power, a Godhead, for all nations have such a Devi supporting their separate existence and keeping it in being. Such beings are as real and more permanently real than the men they influence, but they belong to a higher plane, are part of the cosmic consciousness and being and act here on earth by shaping the human consciousness on which they exercise their influence.

\*

Each nation is a Shakti or power of the evolving spirit in humanity and lives by the principle which it embodies. India is the Bharata Shakti, the living energy of a great spiritual conception, and fidelity to it is the very principle of her existence. For by its virtue alone she has been one of the immortal nations; this alone has been the secret of her amazing persistence and perpetual force of survival and revival.

\*

God always keeps for himself a chosen country in which the higher knowledge is through all chances and dangers, by the few or the many, continually

preserved, and for the present, in this Chaturyuga at least, that country is India.

\*

There are many who, lamenting the bygone glories of this great and ancient nation, speak as if the Rishis of old, the inspired creators of thought and civilisation, were a miracle of our heroic age, not to be repeated among degenerate men and in our distressful present. This is an error and thrice an error. Ours is the eternal land, the eternal people, the eternal religion, whose strength, greatness, holiness may be overclouded but never, even for a moment, utterly cease. The hero, the Rishi, the saint, are the natural fruits of our Indian soil; and there has been no age in which they have not been born.

\*

We are no ordinary race. We are a people ancient as our hills and rivers and we have behind us a history of manifold greatness, not surpassed by any other race, we are the descendants of those who performed Tapasya and underwent unheard-of austerities for the sake of spiritual gain and of their own will submitted to all the suffering of which humanity is capable. We are a people to whom suffering is welcome and who have a spiritual strength



within them, greater than any physical force, we are a people in whom God has chosen to manifest himself more than any other at many great moments of our history. It is because God has chosen to manifest himself and has entered into the hearts of his people that we are rising again as a nation.

\*

India's nature, her mission, the work that she has to do, her part in the earth's destiny, the peculiar power for which she stands is written there in her past history and is the secret purpose behind her present sufferings and ordeals. A reshaping of the forms of our spirit will have to take place; but it is the spirit itself behind past forms that we have to disengage and preserve and to give to it new and powerful thought-significances, culture values, a new instrumentation, greater figures. And so long as we recognise these essential things and are faithful to their spirit, it will not hurt us to make even the most drastic mental or physical adaptations and the most extreme cultural and social changes. But these changes themselves must be cast in the spirit and mould of India and not in any other, not in the spirit of America or Europe, not in the mould of Japan or Russia. We must recognise the great gulf between what we are and what we may and ought to strive to be. But this we must do not in any spirit of discouragement or denial of ourselves and the

truth of our spirit, but in order to measure the advance we have to make. For we have to find its true lines and to find in ourselves the aspiration and inspiration, the fire and the force to conceive them and to execute.

## HER SPIRITUALITY AND MANY-SIDED GREATNESS

Spirituality is indeed the master-key of the Indian mind; the sense of the infinite is native to it. India saw from the beginning,—and, even in her ages of reason and her age of increasing ignorance, she never lost hold of the insight,—that life cannot be rightly seen in the sole light, cannot be perfectly lived in the sole power of its externalities. She was alive to the greatness of material laws and forces; she had a keen eye for the importance of the physical sciences; she knew how to organise the arts of ordinary life. But she saw that the physical does not get its full sense until it stands in right relation to the supraphysical; she saw that the complexity of the universe could not be explained in the present terms of man or seen by his superficial sight, that there were other powers behind, other powers within man himself of which he is normally unaware, that he is conscious only of a small part of himself, that the invisible always surrounds the visible, the suprasensible the sensible, even as infinity always surrounds the finite. She saw too that man has the power of exceeding himself, of becoming himself more entirely and profoundly than he is,—truths which have only recently begun to be seen in Europe and seem even now too great for its common intelligence. She saw

the myriad gods beyond man, God beyond the gods, and beyond God his own ineffable eternity; she saw that there were ranges of life beyond our life, ranges of mind beyond our present mind and above these she saw the splendours of the spirit. Then with that calm audacity of her intuition which knew no fear or littleness and shrank from no act whether of spiritual or intellectual, ethical or vital courage, she declared that there was none of these things which man could not attain if he trained his will and knowledge; he could conquer these ranges of mind, become the spirit, become a god, become one with God, become the ineffable Brahman. And with the logical practicality and sense of science and organised method which distinguished her mentality, she set forth immediately to find out the way. Hence from long ages of this insight and practice there was ingrained in her spirituality, her powerful psychic tendency, her great yearning to grapple with the infinite and possess it, her ineradicable religious sense, her idealism, her Yoga, the constant turn of her art and her philosophy.

But this was not and could not be her whole mentality, her entire spirit; spirituality itself does not flourish on earth in the void, even as our mountain tops do not rise like those of an enchantment of dream out of the clouds without a base. When we look at the past of India, what strikes us next is her stupendous vitality, her inexhaustible power of

life and joy of life, her almost unimaginably prolific creativeness. For three thousand years at least,— it is indeed much longer,— she has been creating abundantly and incessantly, lavishly, with an inexhaustible many-sidedness, republics and kingdoms and empires, philosophies and cosmogonies and sciences and creeds and arts and poems and all kinds of monuments, palaces and temples and public works, communities and societies and religious orders, laws and codes and rituals, physical sciences, psychic sciences, systems of Yoga, systems of politics and administration, arts spiritual, arts worldly, trades, industries, fine crafts,— the list is endless and in each item there is almost a plethora of activity. She creates and creates and is not satisfied and is not tired; she will not have an end of it, seems hardly to need a space for rest, a time for inertia and lying fallow. She expands too outside her borders; her ships cross the ocean and the fine superfluity of her wealth brims over to Judea and Egypt and Rome; her colonies spread her arts and epics and creeds in the Archipelago; her traces are found in the sands of Mesopotamia; her religions conquer China and Japan and spread westward as far as Palestine and Alexandria and the figures of the Upanishads and the sayings of the Buddhists are re-echoed on the lips of Christ. Everywhere, as on her soil, so in her works there is the teeming of a superabundant energy of life. European critics complain that in her ancient architecture, sculpture and art there is no reticence,

no holding back of riches, no blank spaces, that she labours to fill every rift with ore, occupy every inch with plenty. Well, but defect or no, that is the necessity of her superabundance of life, of the teeming of the infinite within her. She lavishes her riches because she must, as the Infinite fills every inch of space with the stirring of life and energy because it is the Infinite.

But this supreme spirituality and this prolific abundance of the energy and joy of life and creation do not make all that the spirit of India has been in its past. It is not a confused splendour of tropical vegetation under heavens of a pure sapphire infinity. It is only to eyes unaccustomed to such wealth that there seems to be a confusion in its crowding of space with rich forms of life, a luxurious disorder of excess or a wanton lack of measure, clear balance and design. For the third power of the ancient Indian spirit was a strong intellectuality, at once austere and rich, robust and minute, powerful and delicate, massive in principle and curious in detail. Its chief impulse was that of order and arrangement, but an order founded upon a seeking for the inner law and truth of things and having in view always the possibility of conscientious practice.

\*

To have put a high value on philosophy,

sought by it the highest secrets of our being, turned an effective philosophic thought on life and called in the thinkers, the men of profoundest spiritual experience, highest ideas, largest available knowledge to govern and shape society, to have subjected creed and dogma to the test of the philosophic mind and founded religious belief upon spiritual intuition, philosophical thought and psychological experience, are... marks of the highest possible type of civilisation.



## HER CONCEPTION OF LIFE, RELIGION AND CULTURE

The Indian conception of life starts from a deeper centre and moves on less external lines to a very different objective. The peculiarity of the Indian eye of thought is that it looks through the form, looks even through the force, and searches for the spirit in things everywhere. The peculiarity of the Indian will in life is that it feels itself to be unfulfilled, not in touch with perfection, not permanently justified in any intermediate satisfaction if it has not found and does not live in the truth of the spirit. The Indian idea of the world, of Nature and of existence is not physical, but psychological and spiritual. Spirit, soul, consciousness are not only greater than inert matter and inconscient force, but they precede and originate these lesser things. All force is power, or means of a secret spirit; the force that sustains the world is a conscious Will, and Nature is its machinery of executive power. Matter is the body or field of a consciousness hidden within it, the material universe a form and movement of the Spirit. Man himself is not a life and mind born of Matter and eternally subject to physical Nature, but a spirit that uses life and body. It is an understanding faith in this conception of existence, it is the attempt to live it out, it is the science and practice of this high endeavour, and it is the as-

piration to break out in the end from this mind bound to life and matter into a greater spiritual consciousness, that is the innermost sense of Indian culture.

The fundamental idea of all Indian religion is one common to the highest human thinking everywhere. The supreme truth of all that is, is a Being or an existence beyond the mental and physical appearances we contact here. Beyond mind, life and body there is a Spirit and Self containing all that is finite and infinite, surpassing all that is relative, a supreme Absolute, originating and supporting all that is transient, a one Eternal. A one transcendent, universal, original and sempiternal Divinity or divine Essence, Consciousness, Force and Bliss is the fount and continent and inhabitant of things. Soul, nature, life are only a manifestation or partial phenomenon of this self-aware Eternity and this conscious Eternal. But this Truth of being was not seized by the Indian mind only as a philosophical speculation, a theological dogma, an abstraction contemplated by the intelligence. It was not an idea to be indulged by the thinker in his study, but otherwise void of practical bearing on life. It was not a mystic sublimation which could be ignored in the dealings of man with the world and Nature. It was a living spiritual Truth, an Eternity, a Power, a Presence that could be sought by all according to their degree of capacity and seized in a thousand ways through life and beyond life. This Truth was to be lived and even to be

made the governing idea of thought and life and action. This recognition and pursuit of something or someone Supreme behind all forms is the one universal credo of Indian religion, and if it has taken a hundred shapes, it was precisely because it was so much alive. The Infinite alone justifies the existence of the finite and the finite by itself has no entirely separate value or independent existence. Life, if it is not an illusion, is a divine Play, a manifestation of the glory of the Infinite. Or it is a means by which the soul growing in Nature through countless forms and many lives can approach, touch, feel and unite itself through love and knowledge and faith and adoration and a Godward will in works with this transcendent Being and this infinite Existence. This Self or this self-existent Being is the one supreme reality, and all things else are either only appearances or only true by dependence upon it. It follows that self-realisation and God-realisation are the great business of the living and thinking human being. All life and thought are in the end a means of progress towards self-realisation and God-realisation.

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Indian culture recognises the spirit as the truth of our being and our life as a growth and evolution of the spirit. It sees the Eternal, the Infinite, the Supreme, the All; it sees this as the secret highest

Self of all, this is what it calls God, the Permanent, the Real, and it sees man as a soul and power of this being of God in Nature. The progressive growth of the finite consciousness of man towards this Self, towards God, towards the universal, the eternal, the infinite, in a word, his growth into spiritual consciousness by the development of his ordinary ignorant natural being into an illumined divine nature, this is for Indian thinking the significance of life and the aim of human existence.... Always to India this ideal inspiration or rather this spiritual vision of Self, God, Spirit, this nearness to a cosmic consciousness, a cosmic sense and feeling, a cosmic idea, will, love, delight into which we can release the limited, ignorant suffering ego, this drive towards the transcendental, eternal and infinite, and the moulding of man into a conscious soul and power of that greater Existence have been the engrossing motive of her philosophy, the sustaining force of her religion, the fundamental idea of her civilisation and culture.

\*

And the first thing we see is that the principle, the essential intention of Indian culture was extraordinarily high, ambitious, and noble, the highest indeed that the human spirit can conceive. For what can be a greater idea of life than that which makes it a development of the spirit in man to its

most vast secret and high possibilities, — a culture that conceives of life as a movement of the Eternal in time, of the universal in the individual, of the infinite in the finite, of the Divine in man, or holds that man can become not only conscious of the eternal and the infinite, but live in its power and universalise, spiritualise and divinise himself by self-knowledge? What greater aims can be for the life of man than to grow by an inner and outer experience till he can live in God, realise his spirit, become divine in knowledge, in will and in the joy of his highest existence? And that is the whole sense of the striving of Indian culture.

## HER ART

The theory of ancient Indian art at its greatest — and the greatest gives its character to the rest and throws on it something of its stamp and influence — is of another kind. Its highest business is to disclose something of the Self, the Infinite, the Divine to the regard of the soul, the Self through its expressions, the Infinite through its living finite symbols, the Divine through his powers. Or the Godheads are to be revealed, luminously interpreted or in some way suggested to the soul's understanding or to its devotion or at the very least to a spiritually or religiously aesthetic emotion. When this hieratic art comes down from these altitudes to the intermediate worlds behind ours, to the lesser godheads or genii, it still carries into them some power or some hint from above. And when it comes quite down to the material world and the life of man and the things of external Nature, it does not altogether get rid of the greater vision, the hieratic stamp, the spiritual seeing, and in most good work — except in moments of relaxation and a humorous or vivid play with the obvious — there is always something more in which the seeing presentation of life floats as in an immaterial atmosphere. Life is seen in the self or in some suggestion of the infinite or of something beyond or there is at least a touch and influence of these which helps

to shape the presentation. It is not that all Indian work realises this ideal; there is plenty no doubt that falls short, is lowered, ineffective or even debased, but it is the best and the most characteristic influence and execution which gives its tone to an art and by which we must judge. Indian art in fact is identical in its spiritual aim and principle with the rest of Indian culture.

\*

A seeing in the self accordingly becomes the characteristic method of the Indian artist and it is directly enjoined on him by the canon. He has to see first in his spiritual being the truth of the thing he must express and to create its form in his intuitive mind; he is not bound to look out first on outward life and Nature for his model, his authority, his rule, his teacher or his fountain of suggestions. Why should he when it is something quite inward he has to bring out into expression? It is not an idea in the intellect, a mental imagination, an outward emotion on which he has to depend for his stimulants, but an idea, image emotion of the spirit, and the mental equivalents are subordinate things for help in the transmission and give only a part of the colouring and the shape. A material form, colour, line and design are his physical means of the expression, but in using them he is not bound to an imitation of Nature, but has



to make the form and all else significant of his vision, and if that can only be done or can best be done by some modification, some pose, some touch or symbolic variation which is not found in physical Nature, he is at perfect liberty to use it, since truth to his vision, the unity of the thing he is seeing and expressing is his only business. The line, colour and the rest are not his first, but his last preoccupation, because they have to carry on them a world of things which have already taken spiritual form in his mind. He has not for instance to re-create for us the human face and body of the Buddha or some one passion or incident of his life, but to reveal the calm of Nirvana through a figure of the Buddha, and every detail and accessory must be turned into a means or an aid of his purpose. And even when it is some human passion or incident he had to portray, it is not usually that alone but also or more something else in the soul to which it points or from which it starts or some power behind the action that has to enter into the spirit of his design and is often really the main thing. And through the eye that looks on his work he has to appeal not merely to an excitement of the outward soul, but to the inner self, *antarātman*. One may well say that beyond the ordinary cultivation of the aesthetic instinct necessary to all artistic appreciation there is a spiritual insight or culture needed if we are to enter into the whole meaning of Indian artistic creation, otherwise we

get only at the surface external things or at the most at things only just below the surface. It is an intuitive and spiritual art and must be seen with the intuitive and spiritual eye. This is the distinctive character of Indian art....

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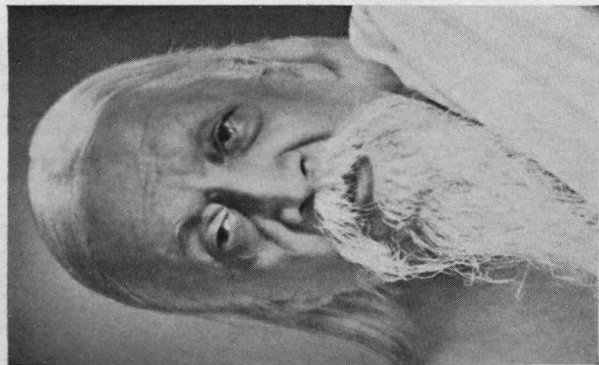
Indian sacred architecture of whatever date, style or dedication goes back to something timelessly ancient and now outside India almost wholly lost, something which belongs to the past, and yet it goes forward too, though this the rationalistic mind will not easily admit, to something which will return upon us and is already beginning to return, something which belongs to the future. An Indian temple, to whatever godhead it may be built, is in its inmost reality an altar raised to the divine Self, a house of the Cosmic Spirit, an appeal and aspiration to the Infinite. As that and in the light of that seeing and conception it must in the first place be understood, and everything else must be seen in that setting and that light, and then only can there be any real understanding.

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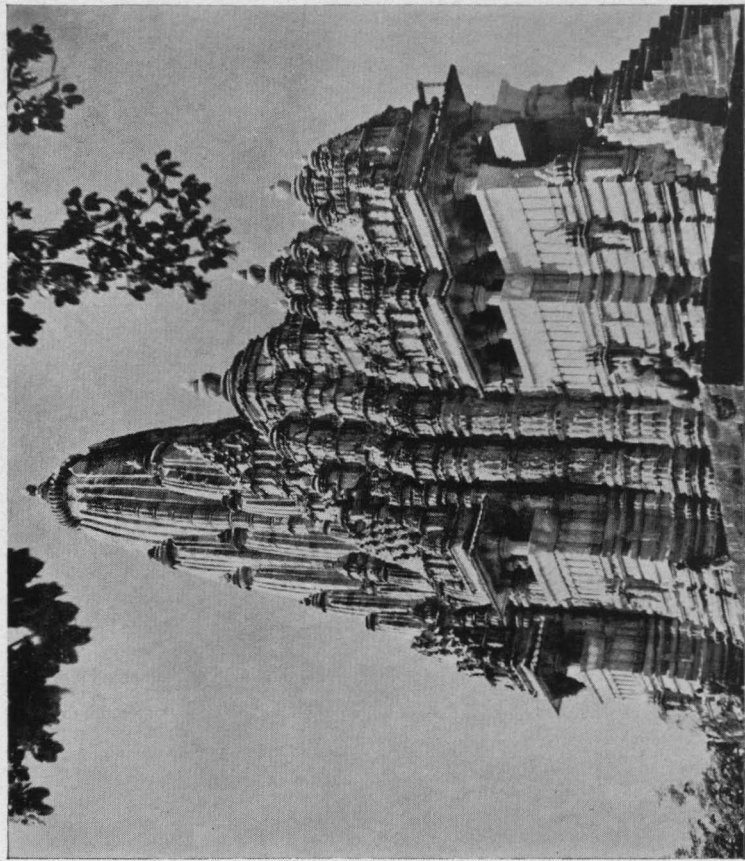
The more ancient sculptural art of India embodies in visible form what the Upanishads threw out into inspired thought and the Mahabharata and



The Mother



Sri Aurobindo



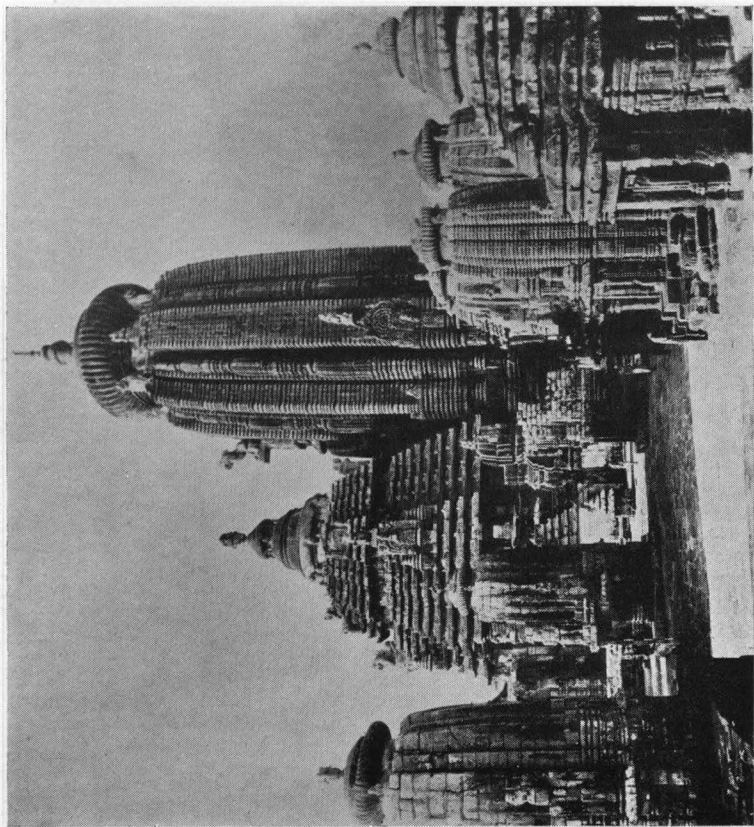
2. Kandarya Mahadeva Temple, Khajuraho.



3. The Great Temple, Tanjore.



4. Mahabodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya.



5. Lingaraj Temple, Bhubaneswar.



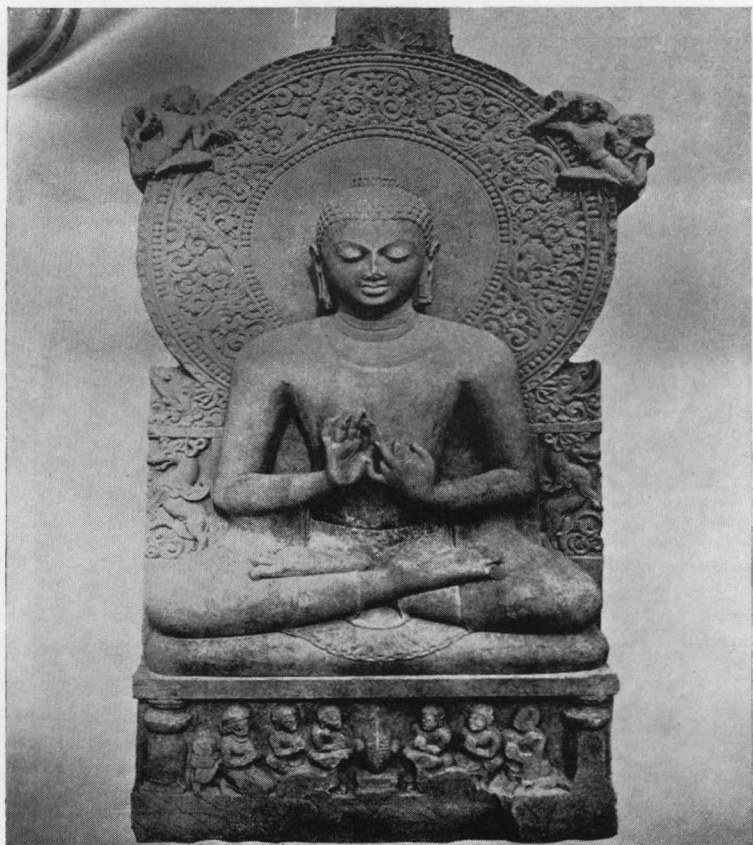


6. Mahishasuramardini, Mahabalipuram.





7. Trimurti, Elephanta Caves.



8. The Buddha delivering the First Sermon at Sarnath.



9. Siva Nataraja, Bronze, Chola period.



10. Flying Musicians, Ajanta Cave 17.



11. Bodhisattava Padmapani, Ajanta Cave 1.

12.  
The Buddha in Kapi-  
lavastu, Mother and  
Child, Ajanta Cave 17.



Ramayana portrayed by the word in life. This sculpture like the architecture springs from spiritual realisation, and what it creates and expresses at its greatest is the spirit in form, the soul in body, this or that living soul power in the divine or the human, the universal and cosmic individualised in suggestion but not lost in individuality, the impersonal supporting a not too insistent play of personality, the abiding moments of the eternal, the presence, the idea, the power, the calm or potent delight of the spirit in its actions and creations. And over all the art something of this intention broods and persists and is suggested even where it does not dominate the mind of the sculptor. And therefore as in the architecture so in the sculpture, we have to bring a different mind to this work, a different capacity of vision and response, we have to go deeper into ourselves to see than in the more outwardly imaginative art of Europe.

\*

The figure of the Buddha achieves the expression of the infinite in a finite image... to embody the illimitable calm of Nirvana in a human form and visage.... Or what of the marvellous genius and skill in the treatment of the cosmic movement and delight of Shiva, the success with which the posture of every limb is made to bring out the rhythm of the significance, the rapturous intensity and aban-



don of the movement itself and yet the just restraint in the intensity of the motion, the subtle variation of each element of the single theme in the seizing idea of these master sculptors?

\*

This is the motive of the Natarajan, the Dancing Shiva, which seems to us to strike the dominant note of this art; the self-absorbed concentration, the motionless peace and joy are within, outside is the whole mad bliss of the cosmic movement....The aim of a renascent Indian Art must be to recover the essence of these great motives and to add the freedom and variety of the soul's self-expression in the coming age when man's search after the Infinite need no longer be restricted to given types or led along one or two great paths, but may at last be suffered to answer with a joyous flexibility the many-sided call of the secret Mystery behind Life to its children.

\*

The spirit and motive of Indian painting are in their centre of conception and shaping force of sight identical with the inspiring vision of Indian sculpture. All Indian art is a throwing out of a certain profound self-vision formed by a going within to find out the secret significance of form



and appearance, a discovery of the subject in one's deeper self, the giving of soul-form to that vision and a remoulding of the material and natural shape to express the psychic truth of it with the greatest possible purity and power of outline and the greatest possible concentrated rhythmic unity of significance in all the parts of an indivisible artistic whole. Take whatever masterpiece of Indian painting and we shall find these conditions aimed at and brought out into a triumphant beauty of suggestion and execution. The only difference from the other arts comes from the turn natural and inevitable to its own kind of aesthesis, from the moved and indulgent dwelling on what one might call the mobilities of the soul rather than on its static eternities, on the casting out of self into the grace and movement of psychic and vital life (subject always to the reserve and restraint necessary to all art) rather than on the holding back of life in the stabilities of the self and its eternal qualities and principles, *guṇa* and *tattva*.

\*

If we look long, for an example, at the adoration group of the mother and child before the Buddha, one of the most profound, tender and noble of the Ajanta masterpieces, we shall find that the impression of intense religious feeling of adoration there is only the most outward general

touch in the ensemble of the emotion. That which it deepens to is the turning of the soul of humanity in love to the benignant and calm Ineffable which has made itself sensible and human to us in the universal compassion of the Buddha, and the motive of the soul moment the painting interprets is the dedication of the awakening mind of the child, the coming younger humanity, to that in which already the soul of the mother has learned to find and fix its spiritual joy. The eyes, brows, lips, face, poise of the head of the woman are filled with this spiritual emotion which is a continued memory and possession of the psychical release, the steady settled calm of the heart's experience filled with an ineffable tenderness, the familiar depths which are yet moved with the wonder and always farther appeal of something that is infinite, the body and other limbs are grave masses of this emotion and in their poise a basic embodiment of it, while the hands prolong it in the dedicative putting forward of her child to meet the Eternal. This contact of the human and eternal is repeated in the smaller figure with a subtly and strongly indicated variation, the glad and childlike smile of awakening which promises but not yet possesses the depths that are to come, the hands disposed to receive and keep, the body in its looser curves and waves harmonising with that significance. The two have forgotten themselves and seem almost to forget or confound each other in that which they adore and contemplate, and yet the

dedicating hands unite mother and child in the common act and feeling by their simultaneous gesture of maternal possession and spiritual giving. The two figures have at each point the same rhythm, but with a significant difference. The simplicity in the greatness and power, the fullness of expression gained by reserve and suppression and concentration which we find here is the perfect method of the classical art of India. And by this perfection Buddhist art became not merely an illustration of the religion and an expression of its thought and its religious feeling, history and legend, but a revealing interpretation of the spiritual sense of Buddhism and its profounder meaning to the soul of India.

\*

In India the revival of a truly national Art is already an accomplished fact and the masterpieces of the school can already challenge comparison with the best work of the other countries. Under such circumstances it is unpardonable that the crude formal teaching of English schools and the vulgar commercial aims and methods of the West should subsist in our midst. The country has yet to evolve a system of education which shall be really national. The taint of Occidental ideals and alien and unsuitable methods has to be purged out of our minds, and nowhere more than in the teaching which should be the foundation of intellectual and

aesthetic renovation. The spirit of old Indian Art must be revived, the inspiration and directness of vision which even now subsists among the possessors of the ancient traditions, the inborn skill and taste of the race, the dexterity of the Indian hand and the intuitive gaze of the Indian eye must be recovered and the whole nation lifted again to the high level of the ancient culture — and higher.

\*

...if Art is to reach towards the highest, the Indian tendency must dominate. The spirit is that in which all the rest of the human being reposes, towards which it returns and the final self-revelation of which is the goal of humanity. Man becomes God, and all human activity reaches its highest and noblest when it succeeds in bringing body, heart and mind into touch with spirit. Art can express eternal truth, it is not limited to the expression of form and appearance. So wonderfully has God made the world that a man using a simple combination of lines, an unpretentious harmony of colours, can raise this apparently insignificant medium to suggest absolute and profound truths with a perfection which language labours with difficulty to reach. What Nature is, what God is, what man is can be triumphantly revealed in stone or on canvas.

## HER ALL-ROUND ACHIEVEMENTS

In what field indeed has not India attempted, achieved, created, and in all on a large scale and yet with much attention to completeness of detail? Of her spiritual and philosophic achievement there can be no real question. They stand there as the Himalayas stand upon the earth in the phrase of Kalidasa, *pr̥thivyā iva mānadaṇḍaḥ*, "as if earth's measuring rod", mediating still between earth and heaven, measuring the finite, casting their plummet far into the infinite, plunging their extremities into the upper and lower seas of the superconscient and the subliminal, the spiritual and the natural being. But if her philosophies, her religious disciplines, her long list of great spiritual personalities, thinkers, founders, saints are her greatest glory, as was natural to her temperament and governing idea, they are by no means her sole glories, nor are the others dwarfed by their eminence. It is now proved that in science she went farther than any country before the modern era, and even Europe owes the beginning of her physical science to India as much as to Greece, although not directly but through the medium of the Arabs. And, even if she had only gone as far, that would have been sufficient proof of a strong intellectual life in an ancient culture. Especially in mathematics, astronomy and chemistry, the chief elements of ancient science, she discovered and formulated much and well and anti-

cipated by force of reasoning or experiment some of the scientific ideas and discoveries which Europe first arrived at much later, but was able to base more firmly by her new and completer method. She was well-equipped in surgery and her system of medicine survives to this day and has still its value, though it declined intermediately in knowledge and is only now recovering its vitality.

In literature, in the life of the mind, she lived and built greatly. Not only has she the Vedas, Upanishads and Gita, not to speak of less supreme but still powerful or beautiful work in that field, unequalled monuments of religious and philosophic poetry, a kind in which Europe has never been able to do anything much of any great value, but that vast national structure, the Mahabharata, gathering into its cycle the poetic literature and expressing so completely the life of a long formative age, that it is said of it in a popular saying which has the justice if also the exaggeration of a too apt epigram, "What is not in this Bharata, is not in Bharatavarsha (India)," and the Ramayana, the greatest and most remarkable poem of its kind, that most sublime and beautiful epic of ethical idealism and a heroic semi-divine human life, and the marvellous richness, fullness and colour of the poetry and romance of highly cultured thought, sensuous enjoyment, imagination, action and adventure which makes up the romantic literature of her classical epoch. Nor did this long continuous vigour of

creation cease with the loss of vitality by the Sanskrit tongue, but was paralleled and carried on in a mass of great or of beautiful work in her other languages, in Pali first and Prakrit, much unfortunately lost,\* and Tamil, afterwards in Hindi, Bengali, Marathi and other tongues. The long tradition of her architecture, sculpture and painting speaks for itself, even in what survives after all the ruin of stormy centuries: whatever judgment may be formed of it by the narrower school of western aesthetics, — and at least its fineness of execution and workmanship cannot be denied, nor the power with which it renders the Indian mind, — it testifies at least to a continuous creative activity. And creation is proof of life and great creation of greatness of life.

But these things are, it may be said, the things of the mind, and the intellect, imagination and aesthetic mind of India may have been creatively active, but yet her outward life depressed, dull, poor, gloomy with the hues asceticism, void of will-power and personality, ineffective, null. That would be a hard proposition to swallow; for literature, art and science do not flourish in a void of life. But here too what are the facts? India has not only had the long roll of her great saints, sages, thinkers, religious founders, poets, creators, scientists, scholars, legists; she has had her great rulers, administrators, soldiers,

\* E. g., the once famous work in Paisachi of which the *Kathāsaritsāgara* is an inferior version.



conquerors, heroes, men with the strong active will, the mind that plans and the seeing force that builds. She has warred and ruled, traded and colonised and spread her civilisation, built polities and organised communities and societies, done all that makes the outward activity of great peoples. A nation tends to throw out its most vivid types in that line of action which is most congenial to its temperament and expressive of its leading idea, and it is the great saints and religious personalities that stand at the head in India and present the most striking and continuous roll-call of greatness, just as Rome lived most in her warriors and statesmen and rulers. The Rishi in ancient India was the outstanding figure with the hero just behind, while in later times the most striking feature is the long uninterrupted chain from Buddha and Mahavira to Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Nanak, Ramdas and Tukaram and beyond them to Ramakrishna and Vivekananda and Dayananda. But there have been also the remarkable achievements of statesmen and rulers, from the first dawn of ascertainable history which comes in with the striking figures of Chandragupta, Chanakya, Asoka, the Gupta emperors and goes down through the multitude of famous Hindu and Mahomedan figures of the middle age to quite modern times. In ancient India there was the life of republics, oligarchies, democracies, small kingdoms of which no detail of history now survives, afterwards the long effort at empire-building, the coloni-



sation of Ceylon and the Archipelago, the vivid struggles that attended the rise and decline of the Pathan and Moghul dynasties, the Hindu struggle for survival in the south, the wonderful record of Rajput heroism and the great upheaval of national life in Maharashtra penetrating to the lowest strata of society, the remarkable episode of the Sikh Khalsa. An adequate picture of that outward life still remains to be given; once given it would be the end of many fictions. All this mass of action was not accomplished by men without mind and will and vital force, by pale shadows of humanity in whom the vigorous manhood had been crushed out under the burden of a gloomy and all-effacing asceticism, nor does it look like the sign of a metaphysically minded people of dreamers averse to life and action. It was not men of straw or lifeless and will-less dummies or thin-blooded dreamers who thus acted, planned, conquered, built great systems of administration, founded kingdoms and empires, figured as great patrons of poetry and art and architecture or, later, resisted heroically imperial power and fought for the freedom of clan or people. Nor was it a nation devoid of life which maintained its existence and culture and still lived on and broke out constantly into new revivals under the ever increasing stress of continuously adverse circumstances. The modern Indian revival, religious, cultural, political, called now sometimes a renaissance, which so troubles and grieves the minds of her critics, is

only a repetition under altered circumstances, in an adapted form, in a greater though as yet less vivid mass of movement, of a phenomenon which has constantly repeated itself throughout a millennium of Indian history.

## WHAT INDIANS SHOULD DO

Our first necessity, if India is to survive and do her appointed work in the world, is that the youth of India should learn to think,—to think on all subjects, to think independently, fruitfully, going to the heart of things, not stopped by their surface, free of prejudgments, shearing sophism and prejudice asunder as with a sharp sword, smiting down obscurantism of all kinds as with the mace of Bhima. Let our brains no longer, like European infants, be swathed with swaddling clothes; let them recover the free and unbound motion of the gods; let it have not only the minuteness but the wide mastery and sovereignty natural to the intellect of Bharata and easily recoverable by it if it once accustoms itself to feel its own power and be convinced of its own worth.

If it cannot entirely shake off past shackles, let it at least arise like the infant Krishna bound to the wain, and move forward dragging with it wain and all and shattering in its progress the twin trees, the twin obstacles to self-fulfilment, blind mediæval prejudice and arrogant modern dogmatism. The old fixed fountains have been broken up, we are tossing in the waters of a great upheaval and change. It is no use clinging to the old ice-floes of the past, they will soon melt and leave their refugees struggling in perilous waters. It is no use

landing ourselves in the infirm bog, neither sea nor good dry land, of a second-hand Europeanism. We shall only die there a miserable and unclean death. No, we must learn to swim and use that power to reach the good vessel of unchanging truth; we must land again on the eternal rock of ages.

Let us not, either, select at random, make a nameless hotchpotch and then triumphantly call it the assimilation of East and West. We must begin by accepting nothing on trust from any source whatsoever, by questioning everything and forming our own conclusions. We need not fear that we shall by that process cease to be Indians or fall into the danger of abandoning Hinduism. India can never cease to be India or Hinduism to be Hinduism, if we really think for ourselves. It is only if we allow Europe to think for us that India is in danger of becoming an ill-executed and foolish copy of Europe....

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To recover Indian thought, Indian character, Indian perceptions, Indian energy, Indian greatness, and to solve the problems that perplex the world in an Indian spirit and from the Indian standpoint, this, in our view, is the mission of Nationalism.... We have to return to the fountainheads of our ancient religion, philosophy, art and literature and pour the revivifying influences of our immemorial

Aryan spirit and ideals into our political and economic development.

The debasement of our mind, character and tastes by a grossly commercial, materialistic and insufficient European education is a fact on which the young Nationalism has always insisted. The practical destruction of our artistic perceptions and the plastic skill and fineness of eye and hand which once gave our productions pre-eminence, distinction and mastery of the European markets, is also a thing accomplished. Most vital of all, the spiritual and intellectual divorce from the past which the present schools and universities have effected, has beggared the nation of the originality, high aspiration and forceful energy which can alone make a nation free and great. To reverse the process and recover what we have lost, is undoubtedly the first object to which we ought to devote ourselves. And as the loss of originality, aspiration, and energy was the most vital of all these losses, so their recovery should be our first and most important objective....

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To raise the mind, character and tastes of the people, to recover the ancient nobility of temper, the strong Aryan character and the high Aryan outlook, the perceptions which made earthly life beautiful and wonderful, and the magnificent spiritual experiences, realisations and aspirations which

made us the deepest-hearted, deepest-thoughted and most delicately profound in life of all the peoples of the earth, is the task next in importance and urgency....

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We have to treasure jealously everything in our social structure, institutions, which is of permanent value, essential to our spirit or helpful to the future; but we must not cabin the expanding and aggressive spirit of India in temporary forms which are the creation of the last few hundred years. That would be a vain and disastrous endeavour. The mould is broken; we must remould in larger outlines and with a richer content....

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We have to learn and use the democratic principle and methods of Europe, in order that hereafter we may build up something more suited to our past and to the future of humanity. We have to throw away the individualism and materialism and keep the democracy. We have to solve for the human race the problem of harmonising and spiritualising its impulses towards liberty, equality and fraternity....

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We cannot arrest our development of industry and commerce while waiting for a new commercial system to develop or for beauty and art to reconquer the world. As in politics so in commerce, we must learn and master the European methods in order that we may eventually rise above them.... A nation need not be luxuriously wealthy in order to be profoundly artistic, but it must have a certain amount of well-being, a national culture and above all, hope and ardour, if it is to maintain a national art based on a wide-spread development of artistic perception and faculty. Moreover, aesthetic arts and crafts cannot live against the onrush of cheap and vulgar manufactures under the conditions of the modern social structure. Industry can only become again beautiful if poverty and the struggle for life are eliminated from society and the co-operative State and commune organised as the fruit of a great moral and spiritual uplifting of humanity. We hold such an uplifting and reorganisation as part of India's mission. Therefore the economic pre-occupation has been added to the political.

We perceive the salvation of the country not in parting with either of these, but in adding to them a religious and moral preoccupation. On the basis of that religious and moral awakening the preoccupation of art and fine culture will be added and firmly based. There are many who perceive the necessity of the religious and moral regeneration, who are inclined to turn from the prosaic details



of politics and commerce and regret that any guide and teacher of the nation should stoop to mingle in them. That is a grievous error. The men who would lead India must be catholic and many-sided.

When the Avatar comes, we like to believe that he will be not only the religious guide, but the political leader, the great educationist, the regenerator of society, the captain of co-operative industry, with the soul of the poet, scholar and artist. He will be in short the summary and grand type of the future Indian nation which is rising to reshape and lead the world....

No department of our life can escape this great regenerating and reconstructing force. There is not the slightest doubt that our society will have to undergo a reconstruction which may amount to revolution, but it will not be for Europeanisation as the average reformer blindly hopes, but for a greater and more perfect realisation of the national spirit in society. Not individual selfishness and mutually consuming struggle but love and the binding of individuals into a single inseparable life is the national impulse. It sought to fulfil itself in the past by the bond of blood in the joint family, by the bond of a partial communism in the village system, by the bond of birth and a corporate sense of honour in the caste. It may seek a more perfect and spiritual bond in the future. In commerce also so long as we follow the European spirit and European

model, the individual competitive selfishness, the bond of mere interest in the joint-stock company or that worst and most dangerous development of co-operative Capitalism, the giant octopus-like Trust and Syndicate, we shall never succeed in rebuilding a healthy industrial life. It is not these bonds which can weld Indians together. India moves to a deeper and greater life than the world has yet imagined possible and it is when she has found the secret of expressing herself in those various activities that her industrial and social life will become strong and expansive.

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Socialism is not an European idea, it is essentially Asiatic and especially Indian. What is called Socialism in Europe, is the old Asiatic attempt to effect a permanent solution of the economic problem of society which will give man leisure and peace to develop undisturbed his higher self. Without Socialism democracy would remain a tendency that never reached its fulfilment, a rule of the masses by a small aristocratic or monied class with the consent and votes of the artisan classes over the rest. Socialistic democracy is the only true democracy, for without it we cannot get the equalised and harmonised distribution of functions, each part of the community existing for the good of all and not struggling for its own separate interests,

which will give humanity as a whole the necessary conditions in which it can turn its best energies to its higher development. To realise those conditions is also the aim of Hindu civilisation and the original intention of caste. The fulfilment of Hinduism is the fulfilment of the highest tendencies of human civilisation and it must include in its sweep the most vital impulses of modern life. It will include Democracy and Socialism also, purifying them, raising them above the excessive stress on the economic adjustments which are the means, and teaching them to fix their eyes more constantly and clearly on the moral, intellectual and spiritual perfection of mankind which is the end.

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Politics, society, economy are in the first form of human life simply an arrangement by which men collectively can live, produce, satisfy their desires, enjoy, progress in bodily, vital and mental efficiency; but the spiritual aim makes them much more than this, first, a framework of life within which man can seek for and grow into his real self and divinity, secondly, an increasing embodiment of the divine law of being in life, thirdly, a collective advance towards the light, power, peace, unity, harmony of the diviner nature of humanity which the race is trying to evolve. This and nothing more but nothing less, this in all its potentialities, is what

we mean by a spiritual culture and the application of spirituality to life.

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Her (India's) mission is to point back humanity to the true source of human liberty, human equality, human brotherhood. When man is free in spirit, all other freedom is at his command; for the Free is the Lord who cannot be bound. When he is liberated from delusion, he perceives the divine equality of the world which fulfils itself through love and justice, and this perception transfuses itself into the law of government and society. When he has perceived this divine equality, he is brother to the whole world, and in whatever position he is placed he serves all men as his brothers by the law of love, by the law of justice. When this perception becomes the basis of religion, of philosophy, of social speculation and political aspiration, then will liberty, equality and fraternity take their place in the structure of society and the *satya yuga* return. This is the Asiatic reading of democracy which India must rediscover for herself before she can give it to the world.

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India has seen always in man the individual a soul, a portion of the Divinity enwrapped in mind

and body, a conscious manifestation in Nature of the universal self and spirit. Always she has distinguished and cultivated in him a mental, an intellectual, an ethical, dynamic and practical, an aesthetic and hedonistic, a vital and physical being, but all these have been seen as powers of a soul that manifests through them and grows with their growth, and yet they are not all the soul, because at the summit of its ascent it arises to something greater than them all, into a spiritual being, and it is in this that she has found the supreme manifestation of the soul of man and his ultimate divine manhood, his *paramārtha* and highest *puruṣārtha*. And similarly India has not understood by the nation or people any organised State or an armed and efficient community well prepared for the struggle of life and putting all at the service of the national ego, — that is only the disguise of iron armour which masks and encumbers the national Purusha,— but a great communal soul and life that has appeared in the whole and has manifested a nature of its own and a law of that nature, a Swabhava and Swadharma, and embodied it in its intellectual, aesthetic, ethical, dynamic, social and political forms and culture. And equally then our cultural conception of humanity must be in accordance with her ancient vision of the universal manifesting in the human race, evolving through life and mind but with a high ultimate spiritual aim,— it must be the idea of the spirit, the soul of

humanity advancing through struggle and concert towards oneness, increasing its experience and maintaining a needed diversity through the varied culture and life motives of its many peoples, searching for perfection through the development of the powers of the individual and his progress towards a diviner being and life, but feeling out too though more slowly after a similar perfectibility in the life of the race.... The only true education will be that which will be an instrument for this real working of the spirit in the mind and body of the individual and the nation. That is the principle on which we must build, that the central motive and the guiding ideal. It must be an education that for the individual will make its one central object the growth of the soul and its powers and possibilities, for the nation will keep first in view the preservation, strengthening and enrichment of the nation-soul and its dharma and raise both into powers of the life and ascending mind and soul of humanity. And at no time will it lose sight of man's highest object, the awakening and development of his spiritual being.

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The right remedy is, not to belittle still farther the agelong ideal of India, but to return to its old amplitude and give it a still wider scope, to make in very truth all the life of the nation a religion in this high spiritual sense.... India has the key to the

knowledge and conscious application of the ideal; what was dark to her before in its application, she can now, with a new light, illumine; what was wrong and wry in her old methods she can now rectify; the fences which she created to protect the outer growth of the spiritual ideal and which afterwards became barriers to its expansion and farther application, she can now break down and give her spirit a freer field and an ampler flight: she can, if she will, give a new and decisive turn to the problems over which all mankind is labouring and stumbling, for the clue to their solutions is there in her ancient knowledge.



## INDIA AND THE WORLD

India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples.

And that which must seek now to awake is not an Anglicised oriental people, docile pupil of the West and doomed to repeat the cycle of the occident's success and failure, but still the ancient memorable Shakti recovering her deeper self, lifting her head towards the supreme source of light and strength and turning to discover the complete meaning and vaster form of her Dharma.

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Mankind upon earth is one foremost self-expression of the universal Being in His cosmic self-unfolding; he expresses, under the conditions of the terrestrial world he inhabits, the mental power of the universal existence. All mankind is one in its nature, physical, vital, emotional, mental and ever has been in spite of all differences of intellectual development ranging from the poverty of the Bushman and negroid to the rich cultures of Asia and Europe, and the whole race has, as the human totality, one destiny which it seeks and increasingly approaches in the cycles of progression and retrogression it describes through the countless millen-

niums of its history. Nothing which any individual race or nation can triumphantly realise, no victory of their self-aggrandisement, illumination, intellectual achievement or mastery over the environment has any permanent meaning or value except in so far as it adds something or recovers something or preserves something for this human march. The purpose which the ancient Indian scripture offers to us as the true object of all human action, *loka-saṁgraha*, the holding together of the race in its cyclic evolution, is the constant sense, whether we know or know it not, of the sum of our activities.

\*

...among all the divisions of mankind it is to India that is reserved the highest and the most splendid destiny, the most essential to the future of the human race. It is she who must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world, the Eternal religion which is to harmonise all religion, science and philosophies and make mankind one soul.

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....for the golden age

In Kali comes, the iron lined with gold,

The Yoga shall be given back to men,

The sects shall cease, the grim debates die out

And atheism perish from the earth,  
Blasted with knowledge, love and brotherhood  
And wisdom repossess Sri Krishna's world.

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India preserves the Knowledge that preserves the world.

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The time has come when India can no longer keep her light to herself but must pour it out upon the world. Yoga must be revealed to mankind because without it mankind cannot take the next step in the human evolution.

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By this Yoga we not only seek the Infinite, but we call upon the Infinite to unfold himself in human life.

\*

Of all the proud nations of the West there is an end determined. When their limited special work for mankind is done they must decay and disappear. But the function of India is to supply the world with a perennial source of light and renovation. Whenever the first play of energy is exhaus-

ted and earth grows old and weary, full of materialism, racked with problems she cannot solve, the function of India is to restore the youth of mankind and assure it of immortality. She sends forth a light from her bosom which floods the earth and the heavens, and mankind bathes in it like St. George in the well of life and recovers strength, hope and vitality for its long pilgrimage. Such a time is now at hand. The world needs India....

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The world waits for the rising of India to receive the divine flood in its fulness.

## THE YOUNG AND THE FUTURE

The future belongs to the young. It is a young and new world which is now under process of development and it is the young who must create it. But it is also a world of truth, courage, justice, lofty aspiration and straightforward fulfilment which we seek to create. For the coward, for the self-seeker, for the talker who goes forward at the beginning and afterwards leaves his fellows in the lurch there is no place in the future.... A brave, frank, clear-hearted, courageous and aspiring youth is the only foundation on which the future nation can be built.... God does not want falterers and flinchers for his work, nor does he want unstable enthusiasts who cannot maintain the energy of their first movements.

Secondly, let them not only stand by their choice but stand by their comrades. Unless they develop the corporate spirit and the sense of honour which refuses to save oneself by the sacrifice of one's comrades in action when that sacrifice can be averted by standing together, they will not be fit for the work they will have to do when they are a little older. Whatever they do let them do as a body, whatever they suffer let them suffer as a body, leaving out the coward and the falterer but, once they are compact, never losing or allowing anything to break that compactness.

If they can act in this spirit, heeding no unpat-

riotic counsels from whatever source they came, then let them follow their duty and their conscience, but let them do nothing in a light even if fervent enthusiasm, moving forward without due consideration and then showing a weakness unworthy of the nation to which they belong and the work to which they have been called.

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If we are to live at all, we must resume India's great interrupted endeavour; we must take up boldly and execute thoroughly in the individual and in the society, in the spiritual and in the mundane life, in philosophy and religion, in art and literature, in thought, in political and economic and social formulation, the full and unlimited sense of her highest spirit and knowledge. And if we do that, we shall find that the best of what comes to us draped in Occidental forms, is already implied in our own ancient wisdom and has there a greater spirit behind it, a profounder truth and self-knowledge and the capacity of a will to nobler and more ideal formations. Only we need to work out thoroughly in life what we have always known in spirit. There and nowhere else lies the secret of the needed harmony between the essential meaning of our past culture and the environmental requirements of our future.

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Our ideal is a new birth of humanity into the spirit; our life must be a spiritually inspired effort to create a body of action for that great new birth and creation. A spiritual ideal has always been the characteristic idea and aspiration of India. But the progress of Time and the need of humanity demand a new orientation and another form of that ideal. The old forms and methods are no longer sufficient for the purpose of the Time-Spirit.... Our ideal is not the spirituality that withdraws from life but the conquest of life by the power of the spirit. It is to accept the world as an effort of manifestation of the Divine, but also to transform humanity by a greater effort of manifestation than has yet been accomplished, one in which the veil between man and God shall be removed, the divine manhood of which we are capable shall come to birth and our life shall be remoulded in the truth and light and power of the spirit....

The West has made the growth of the intellectual, emotional, vital and material being of man its ideal, but it has left aside the greater possibilities of his spiritual existence.... The West has put its faith in its science and machinery and it is being destroyed by its science and crushed under its mechanical burden. It has not understood that a spiritual change is necessary for the accomplishment of its ideals. The East has the secret of that spiritual change but it has too long turned its eyes away from the earth. The time has now come to



heal the division and to unite life and spirit.

This secret too has been possessed but not sufficiently practised by India. It is summarised in the rule of the Gita, *yogasthah kuru karmāṇi*. Its principle is to do all actions in Yoga, in union with God, on the foundation of the highest self and through the rule of all our members by the power of the Spirit. And this we believe to be not only possible for man but the true solution of all his problems and difficulties. This then is the message we shall constantly utter and this the ideal that we shall put before the young and rising India, a spiritual life that shall take up all human activities and avail to transfigure the world for the great age that is coming. India, she that has carried in herself from of old the secret, can alone lead the way in this great transformation of which the present *sandhyā* of the old *yuga* is the fore-runner. This must be her mission and service to humanity, — as she discovered the inner spiritual life of the individual, so now to discover for the race its integral collective expression and found for mankind its new spiritual and communal order....

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Our call is to young India. It is the young who must be the builders of the new world... the young who are free in mind and heart to accept a completer truth and labour for a greater ideal. They

must be men who will dedicate themselves not to the past or the present but to the future. They will need to consecrate their lives to an exceeding of their lower self, to the realisation of God in themselves and in all human beings and to a whole-minded and indefatigable labour for the nation and for humanity. This ideal can be as yet only a little seed and the life that embodies it a small nucleus, but it is our fixed hope that the seed will grow into a tree and the nucleus be the heart of an ever-extending formation. It is with a confident trust in the spirit that inspires us that we take our place among the standard-bearers of the new humanity that is struggling to be born amid the chaos of a world in dissolution, and of the future India, the greater India of the rebirth that is to rejuvenate the mighty body of the ancient Mother.

## INDIAN RENAISSANCE

The Renaissance of India is as inevitable as the rising of tomorrow's sun, and the Renaissance of a great nation of three hundred millions with so peculiar a temperament, such unique traditions and ideas of life, so powerful an intelligence and so great a mass of potential energies cannot but be one of the most formidable phenomena of the modern world....

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This Renaissance, this new birth in India, must become a thing of immense importance both to herself and the world, to herself because of all that is meant for her in the recovery or the change of her time-old spirit and national ideals, to the world because of the possibilities involved in the rearing of a force that is in many respects unlike any other and its genius very different from the mentality and spirit that have hitherto governed the modern idea in mankind, although not so far away perhaps from that which is preparing to govern the future....

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They (Indians) must have the firm faith that India must rise and be great and that everything that

happened, every difficulty, every reverse must help and further their end. The trend was upward and the time of decline was over. *The morning was at hand and once the light had shown itself, it could never be night again. The dawn would soon be complete and the sun rise over the horizon. The sun of India's destiny would rise and fill all India with its light and overflow India and overflow Asia and overflow the world.\** Every hour, every moment could only bring them nearer to the brightness of the day that God had decreed.

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For this thing is written in the book of God and nothing can prevent it, that the national life of India shall meet and possess its divine and mighty destiny.

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The power of the universal Time-Spirit has begun to move in our midst for the creation of a new and greater India.

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There is a great Power at work to help India. There is a Divinity that has been shaping her ends.

\* Italics are ours.

## INDEPENDENCE DAY DECLARATION

August 15th, 1947 is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But we can also make it by our life and acts as a free nation an important date in a new age opening for the whole world, for the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity.

August 15th is my own birthday and it is naturally gratifying to me that it should have assumed this vast significance. I take this coincidence, not as a fortuitous accident, but as the sanction and seal of the Divine Force that guides my steps on the work with which I began life, the beginning of its full fruition. Indeed, on this day I can watch almost all the world-movements which I hoped to see fulfilled in my lifetime, though then they looked like impracticable dreams, arriving at fruition or on their way to achievement. In all these movements free India may well play a large part and take a leading position.

The first of these dreams was a revolutionary movement which would create a free and united India. India today is free but she has not achieved unity. At one moment it almost seemed as if in the very act of liberation she would fall back into the chaos of separate States which preceded the British conquest. But fortunately it now seems pro-

bable that this danger will be averted and a large and powerful, though not yet a complete union will be established. Also, the wisely drastic policy of the Constituent Assembly has made it probable that the problem of the depressed classes will be solved without schism or fissure. But the old communal division into Hindus and Muslims seems now to have hardened into a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that this settled fact will not be accepted as settled for ever or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. India's internal development and prosperity may be impeded, her position among the nations weakened, her destiny impaired or even frustrated. This must not be; the partition must go. Let us hope that that may come about naturally, by an increasing recognition of the necessity not only of peace and concord but of common action, by the practice of common action and the creation of means for that purpose. In this way unity may finally come about under whatever form — the exact form may have a pragmatic but not a fundamental importance. But by whatever means, in whatever way, the division must go; unity must and will be achieved, for it is necessary for the greatness of India's future.

Another dream was for the resurgence and liberation of the peoples of Asia and her return to her

great role in the progress of human civilisation. Asia has risen; large parts are now quite free and are at this moment being liberated: its other still subject or partly subject parts are moving through whatever struggles towards freedom. Only a little has to be done today or tomorrow. There India has her part to play and has begun to play it with an energy and ability which already indicate the measure of her possibilities and the place she can take in the council of nations.

The third dream was a world-union forming the outer basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life of all mankind. That unification of the human world is under way; there is an imperfect imitation organised but struggling against tremendous difficulties. But the momentum is there and it must inevitably increase and conquer. Here too India has begun to play a prominent part and, if she can develop that larger statesmanship which is not limited by the present facts and immediate possibilities but looks into the future and brings it nearer, her presence may make all the difference between a slow and timid and a bold and swift development. A catastrophe may intervene and interrupt or destroy what is being done, but even then the final result is sure. For unification is a necessity of Nature, an inevitable movement. Its necessity for the nations is also clear, for without it the freedom of the small nations may be at any moment in peril and the life even of the large and powerful nations insecure.



The unification is therefore to the interests of all, and only human imbecility and stupid selfishness can prevent it; but these cannot stand for ever against the necessity of Nature and the Divine Will. But an outward basis is not enough; there must grow up an international spirit and outlook, international forms and institutions must appear, perhaps such developments as dual or multilateral citizenship, willed interchange or voluntary fusion of cultures. Nationalism will have fulfilled itself and lost its militancy and would no longer find these things incompatible with self-preservation and the integrality of its outlook. A new spirit of oneness will take hold of the human race.

Another dream, the spiritual gift of India to the world has already begun. India's spirituality is entering Europe and America in an ever increasing measure. That movement will grow; amid the disasters of the time more and more eyes are turning towards her with hope and there is even an increasing resort not only to her teachings, but to her psychic and spiritual practice.

The final dream was a step in evolution which would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness and begin the solution of the problems which have perplexed and vexed him since he first began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society. This is still a personal hope and an idea, an ideal which has begun to take hold both in India and in the West on forward-looking

minds. The difficulties in the way are more formidable than in any other field of endeavour, but difficulties were made to be overcome and if the Supreme Will is there, they will be overcome. Here too, if this evolution is to take place, since it must proceed through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, the initiative can come from India and, although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers.

Such is the content which I put into this date of India's liberation; whether or how far this hope will be justified depends upon the new and free India.

## PROBLEMS OF FREE INDIA

There are deeper issues for India herself, since by following certain tempting directions she may conceivably become a nation like many others evolving an opulent industry and commerce, a powerful organisation of social and political life, an immense military strength, practising power-politics with a higher degree of success, guarding and extending zealously her gains and her interests, dominating even a large part of the world, but in this apparently magnificent progression forfeiting its Swadharma, losing its soul. Then ancient India and her spirit might disappear altogether and we would have only one more nation like the others and that would be a real gain neither to the world nor to us. There is a question whether she may prosper more harmlessly in the outward life yet lose altogether her richly massed and firmly held spiritual experience and knowledge. It would be a tragic irony of fate if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage at the very moment when in the rest of the world there is more and more a turning towards her for spiritual help and a saving Light. This must not and will surely not happen; but it cannot be said that the danger is not there. There are indeed other numerous and difficult problems that face this country or will very soon face it. No doubt we will win through, but we must not dis-

guise from ourselves the fact that after these long years of subjection and its cramping and impairing effects a great inner as well as outer liberation and change, a vast inner and outer progress is needed if we are to fulfil India's true destiny.

## SRI AUROBINDO'S VISION OF THE FUTURE

Not the blind round of the material existence alone and not a retreat from the difficulty of life in the world into the silence of the ineffable, but the bringing down of the peace and light and power of a greater divine Truth and consciousness to transform Life is the endeavour today of the greatest spiritual seekers in India. Here in the heart of such an endeavour pursued through many years with a single-hearted purpose, living constantly in that all-founding peace and feeling the near and greatening descent of that light and power, the way becomes increasingly clear. One sees the soul of India ready to enter into the fullness of the heritage and the hour of an unparalleled greatness approaching where from her soil shall go forth the call and the leading to the highest destinies of the race.

\*

Slowly the light grows greater in the East,  
Slowly the world progresses on God's road.  
His seal is on my task, it cannot fail:  
I shall hear the silver swing of heaven's gates  
When God comes out to meet the soul of the  
world.

\*

To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilit or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions beseiged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation, — this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution.

\*

As there has been established on earth a mental Consciousness and Power which shapes a race of mental beings and takes up into itself all of earthly nature that is ready for the change, so now there will be established on earth a gnostic Consciousness and Power which will shape a race of gnostic spiritual beings and take up into itself all of earth-nature that is ready for this new transformation.

\*

Man is a transitional being; he is not final. For in man and high beyond him ascend the radiant degrees that climb to a divine supermanhood.

There lies our destiny and the liberating key to our aspiring but troubled and mundane existence.

\*

The supramental change is a thing decreed and inevitable in the evolution of the earth consciousness; for its upward ascent is not ended and man is not its last summit. But that the change may arrive, take form and endure, there is needed the call from below with a will to recognise and not deny the Light when it comes, and there is needed the sanction of the Supreme from above. The power that mediates between the sanction and the call is the presence and power of the Divine Mother. The Mother's power and not any human endeavour and tapasya can alone rend the lid and tear the covering and shape the vessel and bring down into this world of obscurity and falsehood and death and suffering Truth and Light and Life divine and the immortal's Ananda.

\*

A mightier race shall inhabit the

mortal's world....

On Nature's luminous tops, on the

Spirit's ground....

Even there shall come as a high crown of all

The end of Death, the death of Ignorance....

The Spirit shall look out through Matter's gaze  
And Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face....  
More and more souls shall enter into light,  
Mind's lit, inspired, the occult summoner hear  
And lives blaze with a sudden inner flame....  
The Spirit shall take up the human play,  
The earthly life become the life divine.



## PART TWO

## SRI AUROBINDO

*"....It matters not if there are hundreds of beings plunged in the densest ignorance. He whom we saw yesterday is on earth. His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into Light, when Thy reign shall be indeed established upon earth...."*

THE MOTHER, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, on her first meeting with Sri Aurobindo on 29th March 1914.

*"....long after this turmoil, this agitation will have ceased... he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and lover of humanity... his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India but across distant seas and lands....,"*

C.R. DAS, Counsel for Sri Aurobindo in the Alipore Conspiracy Case, in concluding his defence address in April 1909.

*"....You have the Word and we are waiting to receive it from you. India will speak through your voice, 'Hearken unto me'."*

RABINDRANATH TAGORE on his visit to Sri Aurobindo on 16 February 1928.

Sri Aurobindo's great life stands a living truth of these previsions.

The nineteenth century was a century of world-wide upsurge. In Europe it witnessed the birth of free nations and great leaders of thought, and in Asia, particularly in India, it witnessed the birth of a number of mighty souls through whose concerted lives and works came about the resurgence of her soul. More than thirty of these historic figures were born during the significant period 1856-1872.

Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta on 15 August 1872. His father Krishnadhona Ghose (1845-1893) came of the wellknown Ghose family of Konnagar, a township in the district of Hooghly, West Bengal, the historic birthplace of quite a few leaders of Indian renaissance. Krishnadhona married Swarnalata, the eldest daughter of Rajnarayan Basu, a pioneer of Indian nationalism. He took his M.D. at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, and served as C.M.O. at many places in Bengal. He was a man of great ability and lavish munificence. He developed an almost exclusive love for everything Western and wanted to give his three sons 'an entirely European upbringing'. Consequently, Sri Aurobindo, when only seven, and his two elder brothers — Binoybhusan and Monmohan — were taken by him to England.

Sri Aurobindo had his early education in an English family. When he joined the St. Paul's School in London as a scholar, he had already

learned Latin, and read, by himself, even as a school boy, Shakespeare and the romantic poets. He passed the Indian Civil Service examination, obtaining record marks in Greek and Latin, and also the Classical Tripos (Part I) of the University of Cambridge, with a high first class and all Classics Prizes. He learnt also French and German, Italian and Spanish in order to read Goethe, Dante and Calderon in the original. When only eleven, he started writing poetry in Greek, Latin and English. Later he took up literary Bengali too.

In his eleventh year and then in his fourteenth he had mystic intimations of his personal rôle in great events and world movements of the future. In response to these divine calls and as a reaction to the humiliations and injustices meted out to his countrymen by the alien rulers, he resolved to give himself to the cause of India's liberation. As Secretary to the Indian Majlis, Cambridge, he made revolutionary speeches, hinting at armed rebellion as a way to it. Naturally, therefore, he dismissed all idea of joining the I.C.S. and returned to India, in 1893, with an appointment in the Baroda State Service.

As he stepped on Indian soil at Apollo Bunder, Bombay, he experienced the descent on him of an infinite calm which abided with him for weeks.

During his Baroda Service, first in the administrative and then in the secretariat work for the Maharaja, he became lecturer in French and

Professor of English, afterwards, Vice-Principal, then Officiating Principal of the State College. The Principal, an Englishman, observed 'a mystic fire and light in his eyes'. He said: 'They penetrated into the beyond. If Joan of Arc heard heavenly voices, Aurobindo probably sees heavenly visions.' Sri Aurobindo's thirteen years at Baroda were years of preparation for his future work. He learned Sanskrit, Marathi, Gujrati and spoken Bengali; studied the Epics, the Upanishads and Sanskrit plays; wrote poetry, plays and essays in English.

Sri Aurobindo's political activity in India began, informally, with his articles in the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay, in 1893, exposing the futility of the then Congress aims and methods. The new and challenging ideas were much too bearable for the British government and also for the then Congress leaders. A well-known one of them requested Sri Aurobindo not to publish such articles any more. Thereafter he drew up a plan of revolutionary work and took part in its organisation in Bombay Presidency and Bengal. Sister Nivedita, who had been asked by Vivekananda to work for India's freedom, joined Sri Aurobindo in this work. She was on the Council of the first Calcutta organisation started in 1902 under Sri Aurobindo's direction.

In 1901, Sri Aurobindo married, according to strict Hindu rites, Mrinalini Devi (1888-1918), daughter of Bhupalchandra Basu. In a letter to his wife in 1905, Sri Aurobindo expressed a little of what he

felt his life was meant for — the liberation of his country by the power of the spirit, *Brahmatej*, founded in *Jnana* (Knowledge), which he felt he had in him. He also said: 'God has sent me to earth to do this work the seed of which first germinated when I was fourteen and it took deep root in me when I was eighteen.' After Sri Aurobindo had left Bengal for Pondicherry, Mrinalini passed her days in religious pursuits in devoted remembrance of Sri Aurobindo.

The Partition of Bengal in 1905 brought Sri Aurobindo out into the open as a leader with the *mantric* power of the Word in his voice and pen. He came over to Calcutta as Principal of the newly set up National College, now Jadavpur University.

Now when the national feeling against the Partition flared up to a white heat, Sri Aurobindo directed the revolutionary workers to utilise the situation and expand and strengthen their activities; guided the Nationalists in the Banaras Congress in formulating their policy and organising their work; started the *Yugantar*, a Bengali daily, and joined the *Bande Mataram*, the English daily of Bipinchandra Pal. These two Nationalist organs carried his lofty ideas of love of country and its freedom, of a flaming zeal for service and sacrifice, of quiet courage and confidence, into the hearts of his countrymen, particularly the youths. He published in the *Bande Mataram* his sequence on *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance* charting out a necessary method of execution of the Nationalist Programme of Swadeshi and Boycott.

On the eve of the Calcutta Congress 1906 Sri Aurobindo was the first openly to declare 'complete autonomy free from British Control' as the country's aim, and to organise the Nationalist Party with Bal Gangadhar Tilak as the leader.

Early in 1907 Sri Aurobindo told his youngest brother Barindra to organise a revolutionary centre in their Maniktala Garden in Calcutta. The same year he attended the Surat Congress but, the Nationalists failing to have their stand adopted had the session broken up. And a number of Congress delegates immediately assembled and adopted the Nationalist programme. This collapse of Moderate leadership of the Congress was a pointer to the new spirit that was in action.

Outwardly, he was occupied with the two-fold work of politics and revolution; inwardly, his soul was preparing for the greater work to which he was to be called. Hailing Sri Aurobindo as 'a rare phenomenon in the world', a far-seeing exponent of the revolutionary nationalism of the time said: 'When such a man worships the Mother, Swaraj is now no far-off event.'

And why did he want Swaraj? It was, he said, because, besides other reasons, 'in the next great stage of human progress it is not a material but a spiritual, moral and psychical advance that has to be made and for this a free Asia and in her a free India must take the lead, and Liberty is therefore, for the world's sake, worth striving for. India must

have Swaraj in order to live;... in order to live well and happily: she must have Swaraj in order to live for the World, not as a slave for the material and political benefit of a nation, but as a free people for the spiritual and moral benefit of the human race'.

Sri Aurobindo was in the political field for a short time, from 1902 to 1910, the first half of which was spent on silent groundwork; the second half, from 1906 to 1910, on open activities. His achievements during this brief period is that 'he flooded the land from Cape to Mount with the effulgence of his light', says P. Sitaramayyah in his *History of Indian National Congress*. M.A. Buch says in his *Rise and Growth of Indian Militant Nationalism*: 'The nationalism of Aurobindo Ghose was a burning religious emotion, the voice of God in man, the invincible demand on the part of the great Indian spiritual culture for expression through the re-awakened soul of the world'.

Early in May 1908 Sri Aurobindo was arrested along with 38 other revolutionaries with whom he remained in jail as an 'undertrial' for one year, after which period he was acquitted. While in jail he had the realisation of cosmic consciousness and the vision of Sri Krishna everywhere. He had also Sri Krishna's assurance of India's freedom and of his release for his greater work for the world.

Obviously to prepare for this greater work, Sri Aurobindo started doing Yoga in 1904. In 1907



while meditating according to the guidance of the Maharashtrian Yogi Lele he had the realisation of the silent Brahman and a complete stillness of mind. From now on whatever he wrote and said came from a higher source quite above the mind. And all his movements began to be guided by what he recognised to be the Divine Will.

Coming out of jail in May 1909 Sri Aurobindo resumed his work with two newly-started weeklies, the *Karmayogin* in English and the *Dharma* in Bengali, in both of which he wrote articles on the deeper significance of Indian nationalism. A veteran Indian historian holds that the essence of Sri Aurobindo's political work was to create 'in the mind and heart of the people the will to freedom and greatness'.

Now he arrived at a turning-point in his career. He received a definite *ādeś*, 'Command from God', to retire into seclusion and concentrate on his spiritual work. And he immediately started for his destined place and reached Pondicherry on 4 April 1910. Suspecting some dangerous revolutionary design in his move, the British Government tried several well-planned means to have him out of the way but Sri Aurobindo's resolve, 'I won't budge an inch from here', foiled their attempts.

On 29 March 1914 the Mother arrived in Pondicherry and joined Sri Aurobindo's work.

When in August 1914 the First World War broke out and man was up against man, imme-

diately it called forth the Saviour Voice of Sri Aurobindo. And jointly with the Mother, he started the work of raising man to a higher level of consciousness by opening to him the vistas of a new light through the monthly philosophical review *Arya* in which he revealed new truths of man's divine destiny, the path to its realisation, the progress of human society towards its divine future, the unification of the human race, the nature and evolution of poetry and its future, the inner meaning of the Veda, the Upanishads and the Gita, the spirit and significance of Indian civilisation and culture. All these have since been embodied in *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Human Cycle*, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *The Future Poetry*, *On the Veda*, *The Upanishads*, *Essays on the Gita*, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*. The *Arya* ceased publication in 1921 after six years of uninterrupted appearance. Sri Aurobindo's supreme spiritual work in poetry is the epic *Savitri* in 23,813 lines of blank verse, the longest poem ever written in English, regarded by an American critic as 'probably the greatest epic in the English language... a perfect cosmic poem'. Besides *Savitri*, there is a large body of his poetic creation, including several dramas, all of which have since been in book form. There are about fifty other publications covering his essays, speeches, correspondence, and translations of and commentaries on Vedic and Upanishadic texts.

Within a few years of his arrival at Pondicherry distinguished leaders, like Chittaranjan Das, Lajpat Rai, B.S. Moonje, visited him seeking his guidance in spiritual, national and international matters; others, like Tilak, through their emissaries, tried to persuade him to come out and resume political leadership of the country again. He declined the proposal making it clear that very few were likely to follow his ideals and ideas which were in line with the Indian spirit and would be 'unintelligible to many and an offense and stumbling-block to a great number'. Nevertheless, he maintained his keen interest in India's freedom and world affairs. For example, he recommended acceptance of the proposals of the Cripps Mission not that they offered freedom immediately but, as he himself put it, they 'provided an opportunity to organise the freedom of India'. He also applied his Yogic force effectively on certain world movements and events, including the Second World War in which Hitler, Sri Aurobindo held, represented titanic forces bent upon destroying human civilisation.

In his vision human problems including that of world unity cannot be solved merely by economic and political means but by a deep and psychological change. Man is destined to evolve a higher than mental consciousness which is essentially a principle of force and harmony. Even for social reforms Sri Aurobindo would not support any legislation or imposition from outside. Any reform, if it is to be

truly effective and fulfil a real need of life, 'must come from within', he said in the early twenties when inter-caste marriage was sought to be legalised.

That the elite of humanity is opening to his thought is evident from the growing study-centres in the West and from translations of his works into various languages of the world as well as from the utterances of men of light and leading in the modern world.

Unlike most ways of Yoga, which are paths to the Beyond leading to the Spirit and away from life, Sri Aurobindo's Yoga rises to the Spirit to re-descend into life with its gains — the light and power and bliss of the Spirit — in order to transform life, mind and body. In a word, an integral transformation is the dynamic aim of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. The only power that could effect such transformation is a Supreme Power above the Mind. This he calls the Supermind. Its manifestation in man would mean his emergence into a new race of Supermen, of Truth-conscious beings. This, affirms Sri Aurobindo, is man's inevitable evolutionary future.

His Ashram in Pondicherry is not a planned institution. It grew as disciples came to live with him and do his Yoga. It took a definite form in 1926 when Sri Aurobindo went into complete seclusion leaving the entire charge to the Mother. Since then it has been expanding. Today it is an international

community of above sixteen hundred men, women and children from various parts of India and the world. Among its many-sided activities today are of the Sri Aurobindo Society, World Union, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, an international City of Oneness, Auroville in name, all representing attempts to give shape to the Master's Ideal.

Sri Aurobindo had five dreams the first of which was 'a free and united India'. When on 15 August 1947 India became free Sri Aurobindo took this coincidence with his birthday 'not as a fortuitous accident, but as the sanction and seal of the Divine Force that guides my steps on the work with which I began life, the beginning of its full fruition'. His second dream was 'the resurgence and liberation of the peoples of Asia'; third, 'a world-union'; fourth, 'the spiritual gift of India to the world'; and last, 'a step in evolution which would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness'. Sri Aurobindo saw all these also either 'arriving at fruition or on the way to achievement'.

On 5 December 1950 Sri Aurobindo entered into Mahasamadhi. But the work initiated by him continues under the divine guidance of the Mother, and the Power he has liberated, says Nolini Kanta Gupta, is working through her for the manifestation and establishment of a new world with a new consciousness.

The Mother declares: 'What Sri Aurobindo repre-

sents in the world's history is not a teaching, not even a revelation, it is a decisive action from the Supreme.'

One day we shall surely see the fulfilment of Sri Aurobindo's memorable vision: 'The sun of India's destiny would rise and fill all India with its light and overflow India and overflow Asia and overflow the world.'

## THE MOTHER, INDIA AND THE WORLD

The Mother round whom the Ashram at Pondicherry has grown up, the Mother who has been presiding over this Ashram and carrying on her work of transformation since 24 November, 1926, is the Mother of whom Sri Aurobindo has spoken in his book *The Mother*. That small but great book is the inner picture of the Mother revealed by Sri Aurobindo — her complete introduction to the world. It is, besides, the straight mantric approach to the very heart of the Integral Yoga.

Says Sri Aurobindo: 'The One whom we adore as the Mother is the divine Conscious Force that dominates all existence, one yet so many-sided that to follow her movement is impossible even for the quickest mind and for the freest and most vast intelligence. The Mother is the consciousness and force of the Supreme and far above all she creates.' And on her role in the supramental creation: 'The Mother comes to bring down the Supramental and it is the descent which makes her full manifestation possible.' Further he adds: 'Her embodiment is a chance for the earth-consciousness to receive the Supramental into it to undergo first the transformation necessary for that to be possible.'

Thus does the Mother act in the universe and in the individual. And she is also beyond the in-

dividual and the universe. But she is working here in the body to bring down something not yet expressed in this material world in order to transform the life here; it is thus, as the Divine Shakti, that she works here for this purpose. She is that in the body, but in her whole consciousness she is also identified with the other aspects of the Divine.

Born, in France, and in the lap of opulence and luxury, she, as a child of three, four or five, would often move away from her toys, playmates and other pleasures into solitary spots and there pass in silence long hours in musings. Visions and intimations of the unseen and the far-off swam into her ken. 'Heaven lies about us in our infancy', says the poet.

The Mother once said that a child can see far ahead. She herself was an instance. One day the Mother was sitting in a chair. Suddenly she felt the world's weight upon her head. She also felt that something expanded, expanded and expanded. Then she knew all about the constitution of the universe and could describe it. At five years of age, the first initiation of the Yoga of Silence was given her when a deep silence from above descended upon her.

About the age of thirteen, for about a year, night after night, while in bed, she seemed to go out of her body and rise straight up above the house, then above the town, very high, clad in a magnificent golden robe far too long for her. As



she rose higher and higher the robe lengthened, spreading in a circle around her as if forming a vast roof over the town. She would see coming out from all sides men, women, children, old men, sick men, unhappy men. They would gather under the outspread robe recounting their sufferings and imploring help. In response, the robe stretched out to them, and as they touched it they were consoled or healed, and became happier and stronger than before. All her consciousness was concentrated in the heart and the heart was no longer an organ but the Divine Love, impersonal, eternal, living in the centre of everything upon the whole earth, stretching out infinite arms and enveloping with limitless tenderness all beings that clasped upon her breast vaster than the universe.

The visions and intimations apart, the Mother had, on 8 December 1916, a direct conversation with the Lord, the concluding part of which is:

‘I (the Lord) have chosen thee from all eternity to be my exceptional representative upon the earth not in an invisible and hidden way but in a way apparent to the eyes of all men. And what thou wert created to be, thou shalt be.’

Similarly, in his early childhood, Sri Aurobindo had his mystic experiences and, at his eleventh and fourteenth years, clearer and clearer intimations of world movements to be in which he would have his rôle to play. Finally, in Alipore jail, in 1909, he had the *darshan* of Vasudeva and His constant

association, His clearest assurance of India's independence and His definite *adesh* (command) to leave off politics and prepare for His work — the transformation of India and the world.

This is how the Supreme prepared His chosen ones for His stupendous world-reshaping work.

When, later, the Mother used to go up in her consciousness and was once on the threshold of Nirvana, the divine Will turned her towards the earth. One part of the Buddha had received Nirvana, the other part, she said, came down to work for the good of the world. The suggestion of her work for humanity came from the Buddha himself as recorded by the Mother in her *Prayers and Meditations*, dated 20 December 1916: Says the Buddha to the Mother in her meditation: 'I see in your heart a diamond surrounded with a golden light. It is at once pure and warm, so that it can manifest impersonal love.... Turn towards the earth and men and radiate ....'

A fact of historical importance, once disclosed by the Mother, was that, while engaged in Buddhistic sadhana in France, she had a vision that the Divine was on earth to aid her work but she did not know where He was till she came to India, saw Sri Aurobindo and recognised him. Also she recognised in India her spiritual home. 'From the first time I came to India,' the Mother said, 'I felt that India is my true country, the country of my soul and spirit.' It was in India that she became conscious

of her Universal Motherhood. Since then identified with the soul of this ancient land she has been working with Sri Aurobindo in her infallible spiritual way for the all-round uplift of India as a step towards the fulfilment of her high mission in the world.

March 29, 1914, will go down in the spiritual history of the world as a red-letter Day when two Divine Forces in human forms, so long working secretly and independently but more or less on identical lines, without outwardly seeing each other, met and each recognised the other — be it remembered that since the beginning of creation they have been co-workers — joined their forces in the common task of carrying out their divinely-appointed mission — to rescue the earth from the abyss of darkness and death to the Light and Bliss of the Life divine.

In the same year, from the heights of her consciousness, the Mother saw that India was free and told the fact to Sri Aurobindo to whom it was a reaffirmation of Sri Krishna's assurance of India's freedom, given him in the Alipore jail. On 6 July 1914, the Mother had a wonderful perception. She writes: '...the formidable omnipotence of Thy Force is there; ready for manifestation, waiting; it is building the propitious hour, the favourable opportunity....The Force is there. Rejoice, you who wait and hope: 'the new manifestation is sure; the new manifestation is near.' It is remarkable that

both the perceptions — of India's independence and of the manifestation of the formidably omnipotent Divine Force — obviously, the Supramental Manifestation — previsioned at about the same time, materialised too at about the same time, the former on 15 August 1947, the latter in April 1956. We learn from the Mother's talks on her Prayer of 22 December 1914, that her prayer for the transformation of the earthly desires has been granted. But the effect will take time to be felt here. The delay in materialisation is caused by material resistance, explained she.

It is a well-known fact that on the rock of this material resistance the mighty efforts of the spiritual masters of the past have been wrecked. That was why they ignored and dismissed what now constitutes the second and the most dynamic side of the Mother's personality and preferred, the first: self-identification with the Supreme or the Transcendent at the top, rejection of the earth at the bottom — left abandoned to its fate.

The Mother and Sri Aurobindo have been called to work at the opposite end, on the earth and for the earth. How possible in the face of material resistance? Let us then turn for a moment to the Mother's revealing New Year Message (1958):

'O Nature, Material Mother, thou hast said that thou wilt collaborate and there is no limit to the splendour of this collaboration.'

By way of a short explanation the Mother has

said that Material Nature has joyfully admitted into her workings the Supramental Force that is now very active on earth. The deeply entrenched Resisting Force is now a glad collaborator of the Mother working with Supramental Power.

A Victory unprecedented in the spiritual history of the world; to the evolutionary movement a powerful impetus and an accelerator.

Aided by Supramental Power and the open-hearted collaboration of Nature, the Mother now advances on the path of her work. Her work is for the world — to divinise it into a permanent Home of the Spirit, purifying and perfecting human life into a golden vessel of Divine Love, Power and Bliss. A revolutionary change embracing every department of life, sweeping off barriers and divisions within man himself as an individual, between man and man, country and country, nation and nation, kneading, as it were, the whole mass of humanity with the ferment of her all-powerful Divine Love into one great indivisible Whole, its innumerable components not dissolved but richly developed and developing in perfect liberty, and placing it in the arms of the Servant and Master of Love, the Supreme and the Transcendent.

The Mother and Sri Aurobindo stand pledged to each other and to the world that they will carry on the work till it is achieved. Their call to man has gone forth out of their Infinite Love and Compassion. It is for man to respond, and collaborate with

a glad spontaneity.

Man now has the happiest assurance in the Mother's own words: 'A constant action is going on in the world. It is spreading and it is effective everywhere. Everywhere it gives new pushes, new turns, new ideas, new will-formations.' 'Through the apparent chaos of today a new and better order is being formed, but to see one must have faith in the Divine Grace.' The broadening of outlook and cooperative effort in matters of human concern beyond national limits, to the international, even to the universal, is a promising sign. If the world today is heaving to higher ideas and awakening to newer truths, hitherto considered strange or fantastic, one can well imagine how the fuller picture will emerge with the growing action of the Supermind now always at work.

Says the Mother: 'Once more we are at this moment at a decisive turn in the history of the earth....All the aspects of man's progress should now unite with yet many others to form a more total and complete progress, a more perfect understanding of life, a more integral approach to the Divine. Even this unification is not sufficient. One must have faith, a vision of the future, of the goal towards which humanity is moving, of the future realisation of the world, the last spiritual revolution of which Sri Aurobindo speaks, that which will open the new age, that is to say, a Supramental revolution....That will not be a new religion which

will not only be useless but harmful. A new life has to be created, a new consciousness has to be expressed, something which is beyond intellectual limitations and mental formulas. It is a living truth that has to manifest.

‘But all that is of the future, a future that has begun but will take some time before realising itself integrally. In the meanwhile, we are in a very special situation, extremely special which has had no precedent. We are attending on the birth of a new world, altogether young, altogether weak — weak not in its essence, but in its external manifestation — not yet recognised, not yet felt, denied by most; but it is there, it is there endeavouring to grow and quite sure of the result. Yet, the road to reach there is a new road, that has never before been traced; none went by that way, none did that. It is a beginning, a universal beginning....It is no longer a hope, it has become a certainty.’

What place has India in the new divine set-up? Why has the Universal Mother, the Mother of all, and of all the worlds, why has Sri Aurobindo with his infinite expanse of divine wisdom, chosen to fix upon India as the centre of their work? Let every Indian, every man in general, infer the answer from what they have said of India.

Says the Mother: ‘In the whole creation the earth has a place of distinction, because, unlike any other planet, it is evolutionary with a psychic entity at its



centre. In it, India, in particular, is a divinely-chosen country.' And further, 'The future of India is very clear. India is the Guru of the world. The future structure of the world depends on India. India is a living soul. She incarnates the spiritual knowledge in the world. Government of India ought to recognise this significance of India and plan their actions accordingly. The soul of a nation consists in its aspirations, aptitudes, capacities placed at the service of the Divine. India is very conscious of her mission in the world. She is waiting for the exterior means of manifestation....India must maintain the spiritual leadership of the world. If she does not, she will collapse, and with it will go the whole world....India has a single soul and while we have to wait till we can speak of an India one and indivisible our cry must be: Let the soul of India live for ever.'

Here is the Mother's Independence Day Invocation: 'O our Mother, O Soul of India, Mother who hast never forsaken thy children even in the days of darkest depression, even when they turned away from thy voice, served other masters and denied thee, now when they have arisen and the light is on thy face in this dawn of thy liberation, in this great hour we salute thee. Guide us so that the horizon of freedom opening before us may be also *a horizon of true greatness and of thy true life in the community of the nations. Guide us so that we*



*may be on the side of great ideals and show to men thy true visage, as a leader in the ways of the Spirit and a friend and helper of all the peoples.'*

## THE MOTHER ON INDIA

O India, land of light and spiritual knowledge! wake up to your true mission in the world, show the way to union and harmony.

\*

India has become the symbol representing all the difficulties of modern humanity. India will become the land of its ressurection, the ressurection to a higher and truer life.

\*

What is the duty of every Indian today in the present emergency?

The number one problem for India now is to find back and manifest her soul.

\*

Divine Power alone can help India. If you can build faith and cohesion in the country it is much more helpful than any man-made power.

\*

It is only India's soul who can unify the country.

Externally the provinces of India are very different in character, tendencies, culture, as well as in language, and any attempt to unify them artificially could have only disastrous results.

But her soul is one, intense in her aspiration towards the spiritual truth, the essential unity of creation and the divine origin of life, and by uniting with this aspiration the whole country can recover a unity that has never ceased to exist for the superior mentality.

\*

Let India work for the future and take the lead. Thus she will recover her true place in the world.

Since long it was the habit to govern through division and opposition. The time has come to govern through union, mutual understanding and collaboration.

To choose a collaborator, the value of the man is more important than the party to which he belongs.

The greatness of a country does not depend on the victory of a party but on the union of all the parties.

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Let us all work for the greatness of India.

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True spirituality is not to renounce life, but to make life perfect with a Divine Perfection.

This is what India must show to the world now.

\*

India must be saved for the good of the world since India alone can lead the world to peace and a new world order.

\*

There must be a group forming a strong body of cohesive will with the Spiritual Knowledge to save India and the world. It is India that can bring Truth in the world. By manifestation of Divine Will and Power alone India can preach her message to the world and not by imitating the materialism of the West. By following the Divine Will India shall shine at the top of the spiritual mountain and show the way of Truth and organise World Unity.

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Sri Aurobindo always loved deeply his Motherland. But he wished her to be great, noble, pure and worthy of her big mission in the world. He refused to let her sink to the sordid and vulgar level of blind self-interests and ignorant prejudices. This is why, in full conformity to his will, we lift

high the standard of truth, progress and transformation of mankind.

## THE MOTHER ON AUROVILLE

Just as, on seeing Sri Aurobindo for the first time, she had foreseen India's independence as far back as 1914, so also had she foreseen the descent of the Supermind in 1931 and had prophesied that 'the effect of its connection with the material being would be a new creation, beginning with a model town and ending with a perfect world'. And just twelve years after the Supramental descent, the 'model town' had its inauguration in the border areas of Madras and Pondicherry on 28 February 1968. The town has been named by the Mother Auroville meaning literally the City of Dawn, the Dawn of the new Light of Heaven, meaning also the City of Sri Aurobindo whose divine ideals are to be its base, core and summit and whose spiritual Force and Light of guidance along with the Mother's are to be its life and soul. Its other appellations used by the Mother, are: 'a World City', 'a City of human unity and universal culture', 'a City at the service of Truth'.

All these names and the Mother's 'Greetings from Auroville to all men of good will, to all those who thirst for progress and aspire to a higher and truer life' and the Charter of Auroville announced by the Mother, as follows, throw light on how Auroville is intended to make for 'a perfect world'.

The Charter runs:

1. Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. But to live in Auroville one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.
2. Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress and a youth that never ages.
3. Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisations.
4. Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual research for a living embodiment of an actual human unity.

Sponsored by India, unanimously supported by UNESCO, all its 124 member-countries participated in the inauguration by adding, each its country's earth to the earth of Auroville, thus symbolising human unity as its foundation. And under the divine guidance of the Mother, Auroville is destined to be the centre of a world movement leading to its ultimate aim, 'a perfect world'.

It may be added that Auroville's plan has evol-

ved itself in a way all its own and symbolises the Truth of the world to be. And it is the Supreme's will and the Supramental Force alone that can execute the plan through capable human factors, sincere to the core.

Here are a few more words of the Mother on Auroville:

'At last there is a place where one can think only of progressing and transcending oneself.'

'At last there is a place where one can live in peace with no conflict and rivalry among nations and religions and ambitions.'

'At last there is a place where nothing will have the right to impose itself as the exclusive truth.'

'Auroville is the shelter built for all who want to hasten forward towards a future of Knowledge and Peace and Unity.'

'Humanity is not the last step in terrestrial creation. Evolution continues and man will be surpassed.'

'Each one must find out whether he wishes to participate in the coming of the New Race.'



Says Bhawani the Mother: 'I am the Infinite Energy which streams forth from the Eternal in yourselves. I am the Mother of the Universe, the Mother of the Worlds, and for you who are the children of the Sacred Land, Aryabhumi, made of her clay and reared by her sun and winds, I am Bhawani Bharati, Mother of India.... by making a centre for the future religion you will be furthering the immediate will of the Eternal and storing up merit which will make you strong in this life and great in another. You will be helping to create a nation, to consolidate an age, to aryanise a world. And that nation is your own, that age is the age of yourselves and your children, that world is no fragment of land bounded by seas and hills, but the whole earth with her teeming millions.'

(Sri Aurobindo in *Bhawani Mandir*)

**'Arise, O Souls, arise! Strength has come,  
darkness has passed away, the Light is arriving!'**

**'Create the divine race.'**

**(Rig Veda)**